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ABSTRACT

Drawing on findings from 20 years of research on sexism in American classrooms, this book examines the history of women's education and its shortcomings. The hidden curriculum, the effect of gender bias on self-esteem, test results, and professional orientation of girls from primary education through college were examined through naturalistic observation. The results suggest that girls are systematically denied opportunities in areas where boys are encouraged to excel, often by well-meaning teachers who are unaware that they are transmitting sexist values. Girls are taught to speak quietly, to defer to boys, to avoid math and science, and to value neatness over innovation, appearance over intelligence. In the early grades, girls, brimming with intelligence and potential, routinely outperform boys on achievement tests, but by the time they graduate from high school they lag far behind boys--a process of degeneration that continues into adulthood. The subtle and often inadvertent sexism by even well-intentioned people contributes to an environment that ultimately negatively impacts the healthy development of many girls. This book, by describing how adults "fail in fairness," gives suggestions on what must be done to make schools serve all children better. A list of over 250 recommended books with strong female characters is included. (AA)

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